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SUBJECT: A/S NEWMAN AND SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE MEET SPLM
LEADERSHIP IN NEW SITE

1. (U) SUMMARY. On August 3, A/S Newman and Special Representative Winter traveled to New Site, South Sudan, to offer their condolences over the death of John Garang and to meet with new SPLM Chairman Salva Kiir. Kiir briefed Newman and Winter on the sequence of events surrounding Garang's death and the SPLM's plans for a funeral. Newman shared the U.S.' full support for the SPLM and the peace process, asking what the U.S. could do to help. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) Kiir described in detail the timeline leading to Garang's death and the subsequent recovery of the bodies. He said that SPLA troops in the New Kush training area reported hearing a thud that is believed to have been the helicopter hitting a mountain. The SPLM moved quickly to gather its leadership in New Site, quickly electing Kiir the new Chairman, nominating him to be 1st Vice President of the Government of New Unity and President of the Government of South Sudan.

3. (U) Kiir proceeded to describe the SPLM's plans for Garang's funeral. He said there had been some initial disagreement between Garang's family and the leadership about whether the funeral should be in Garang's hometown (Bor) or not. They finally agreed that the funeral will take place in Juba on August 6. Before the funeral, Garang's remains will travel around the South. Kiir said they would go to Kurmuk, Kauda, Rumbek, Yei, Bor and Panyagor before arriving in Juba. (Note: Subsequent conversations revealed that the exact route and timing are still being worked out. End Note.)

4. (U) A/S Newman told Kiir they had traveled to New Site to offer their condolences, express the U.S.' continued support of the people of Sudan and the CPA, and to let the SPLM know that the U.S. stands ready to assist in any way possible. Newman acknowledged Kiir and the SPLM's statements calling for a continuation of Garang's vision and said the U.S. was publicly urging all parties to stay committed to the CPA and not to use this tragedy for personal or political gain. She reminded Kiir that the U.S. expected him to get involved in resolving the Darfur crisis. She also raised the issues of the investigation into the crash, how to recognize Garang around the world and how to proceed with the CPA and in Darfur.

5. (U) Special Representative Winter shared his personal connection to Garang and the SPLM, saying he was looking forward to spending more time in south Sudan in his new job. He praised the SPLM for having done everything right in responding to the tragedy. He emphasized that despite the great loss, the partnership between the U.S. and the SPLM continues.

6. (U) Kiir responded that the SPLM was going to start over on implementing the CPA as if nothing had been done, but remained committed to implementing it as quickly as possible. He made it clear that the SPLM would like international help with the investigation into the crash, saying the team should consist of experts from the U.S., UK, Uganda, Kenya, Sudan and the UN, with Russians brought in by Uganda because the helicopter was Russian-built.

7. A/S Newman and Special Representative Winter have cleared this cable.
BELLAMY